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Author

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Imprint



REPORT

OF THE

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

ON

PROVISION FOR DISABLED

NEW JERSEY SOLDIERS.

Presented in the House of Assembly, Feb. 1, 1865, and Ordered to be Printed

TRENTON, N. J.:

PRINTED BY J. R. FREESE, "STATE GAZETTE" OFFICE,
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The commissioners appointed by an act of the legislature entitled "Joint Resolutions in relation to disabled soldiers," approved April 12th, 1864, respectfully submit the following report:

In pursuance of the requirements of the above stated resolutions, the commissioners entered at once upon their duties, and opened a correspondence with our Ministers in France and England, with a view of obtaining information concerning institutions having similar objects in those countries, and have sought other sources of information, in order to secure all the light which experience could give. While there is great dissimilarity between the people of those countries and our own in their habits and mode of life, and although the same rules and restrictions there adopted would not, as a rule, be adapted to a people brought up under our free institutions, yet we can learn much from their experience. All nations agree that it is the bounden duty of a state to care for and protect those who, by reason of their devotion to their country, have become unable to maintain themselves; and in most of the countries of Europe, liberal provisions have been made for this honored class.

Information derived from the Pension Bureau of the United States shows that since the commencement of the present war, there have been about 1,342 applications for pensions from discharged New Jersey soldiers, of whom 671, or fifty per cent., were admitted to pensions: 503, or thirty-seven and a half per cent., were rejected, because the disability was not received in the line of duty, or existed anterior to enlistment: and 168, or twelve and a half per cent., were waiting additional evidence.

The number of New Jersey pensioners on	
June 30th, 1861, for the army, was	28
June 30th, 1861, for the navy, was	2
June 30th, 1862, for the army, was additional	3
June 30th, 1862, for the navy, was none	0
June 30th, 1863, for the army, was additional	84
June 30th, 1863, for the navy, was additional	1
June 30th, 1864, for the army, was additional	447
	<hr/>
	565
November 30th, 1864, for the army, was	105
November 30th, 1864, for the navy, was	1
	<hr/>
	106
	<hr/>
	671

Died, re-enlisted, and gone to other states where they receive their pensions, fifty-two.

It will be observed by the above table, that the number of pensioners is rapidly multiplying and in a greatly increased ratio: As in 1863, only eighty-five pensioners were added, while in 1864, four hundred and forty-seven were added to the roll. If the same number of pensioners are admitted for the year ending June 30th, 1865, as in the last year, it will give 1,012 patients. But should the increase go on in the same ratio as in the last year, the number would then reach 2,912. Though it is not thought that the number will increase in this proportion, yet it is presumed that there will be an increase the present year, and perhaps the next, over the last, by additions from the army and *Veteran Reserve Corps*; many of whom, on their discharge, will be entitled to pensions; so that it is estimated that the number of Jersey men who will be entitled to pensions will not vary much from two thousand.

The following shows the nature and degree of disability:

Lost a leg or an arm,	75
Wounded,	375
Not ascertained,	22
Disabled by disease contracted or injury received in the service,	199
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	671

The commissioners assume two thousand as the number on which their calculations should be based. Of this number, perhaps nine out of every ten have families, parents, or friends, with whom they would prefer to live, and who, by their labor, with the aid of the pensions allowed by the government, would be enabled to secure a comfortable support. It is therefore believed that less than one-tenth of the whole number would need or desire homes in a public institution. To provide more especially for this latter class, those who from the nature and extent of their disability, such as have lost the use of both eyes, both arms, both legs, or

who are otherwise wounded or disabled; those who have been broken down in body by disease and privations while in their country's service, and who are unable to care for themselves, is understood to be the object for which this commission was appointed.

The inquiry is, what provision shall be made for these persons? They are not paupers, seeking alms at the hands of the government, but pensioners, entitled to compensation for services rendered. They are not debtors to, but creditors of the public. They have imperiled their lives and shed their blood in the cause of their country, by privations, hardships, and wounds; in that cause have been deprived of the power of self-support, and the country is indebted to them to the extent, at least, of a comfortable maintenance during their disability. What is needed is not an almshouse, to impress them with the sense of being the objects of charity, and to crush every feeling and hope of independence, but a Retreat, provided, as far as practicable, with the comforts and influences of a home, where they may realize that the republic is not ungrateful; and where they may enjoy the respect of their fellow citizens, and receive, in part, the reward due to their patriotism and valor. There are many reasons why this provision should be made in each state for its own soldiers.

First, it is desirable that the discharged soldier should return to the walks of civil life, to the industrial pursuits, and to domestic influences.

The association of family and the society of friends, have been found greatly to promote the recovery of the sick and to contribute to the comfort of the disabled, and the sense of being in his own state, and within the reach of family and friends, has a similar effect.

Should Retreats be provided by the general government, patients must be removed to other states, and be strangers in, to them, a strange land.

The well founded objections to the entertainment of a large number of men together can be better met by institutions in the several states, where the number must necessarily be limited. These persons need immediate relief, and that can be more speedily afforded by each state.

If afterwards the general government shall deem proper to assume the expense, or to make appropriations toward it, the state will be so far relieved of the charge. But the necessities of the case forbid the delay for the action of the general government.

As the commissioners are directed "particularly to inquire whether a State Retreat or Home should be built," in order to carry out the intentions of the legislature, they have given special attention to this direction, and recommend, in view of the present and prospective wants of the wounded and invalid soldiers, that a State Retreat or Home be established, and that fifty or more acres of land, suitably located, be purchased; that buildings, adapted to

the purpose, be erected thereon; and that it be furnished with all the conveniences necessary for such an institution. It is believed that the sum of fifty thousand dollars will be sufficient to pay for what is proposed, *viz*:

Land,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$5,000
Cost of buildings,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	30,000
Furniture,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10,000
Outbuildings, fences, tools, and contingencies,									5,000
Total,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<u>\$50,000</u>

If it is found that a greater number than that contemplated have to be provided for, the cost of enlarging the buildings so as to accommodate them is all the additional expense that would be incurred, except, perhaps, a small sum for furniture. The ground will be used principally for raising vegetables for the establishment and pasturage of cows.

It is further recommended that a law be passed appointing commissioners to select and purchase the land, who, so soon as the land is secured, shall contract for and superintend the erection of the buildings, provide the furniture, and make such improvements and purchases as are contemplated in the above named appropriation.

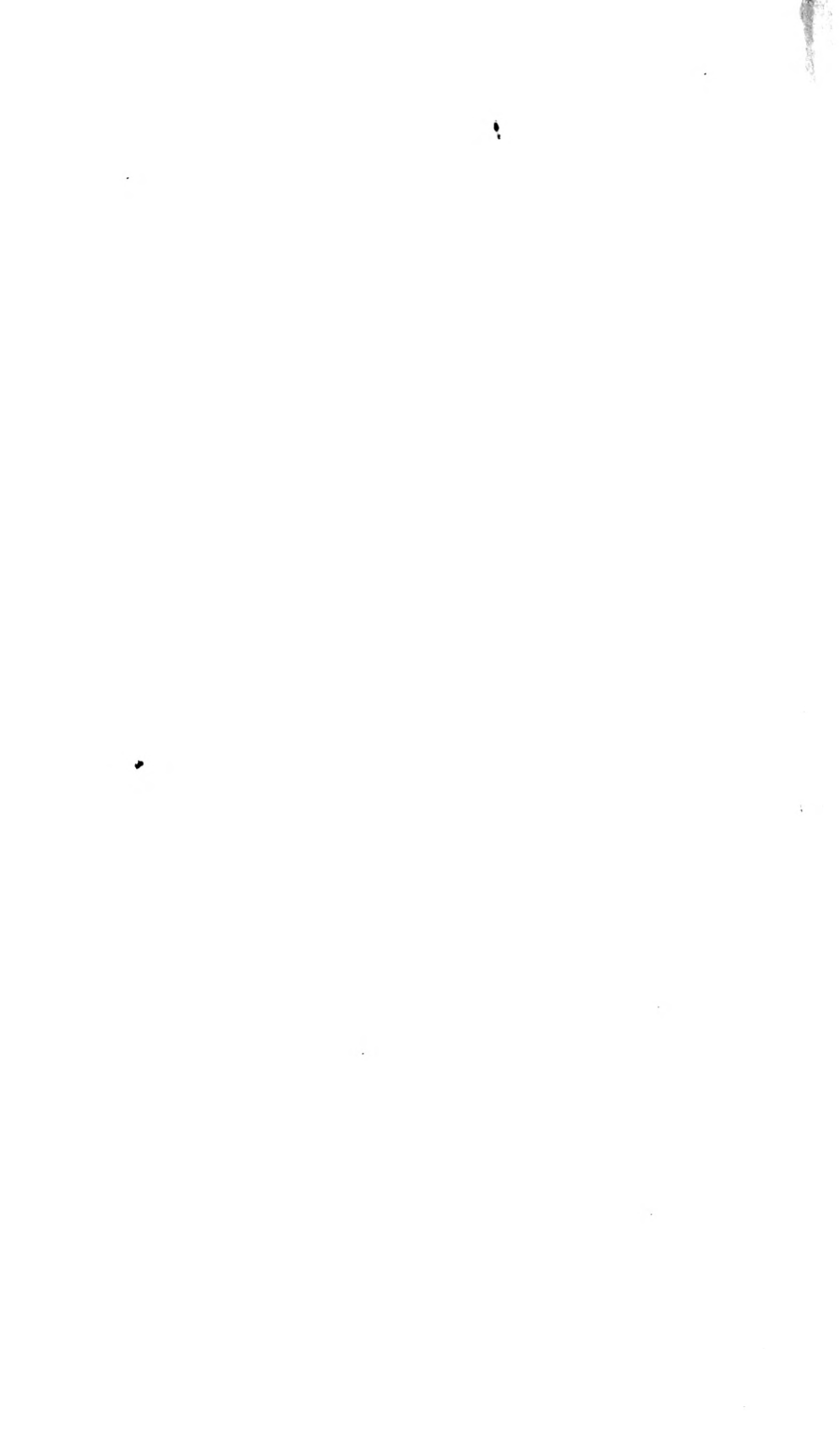
With a view of encouraging those who prefer to live with their own families or friends, but who, by reason of the inadequacy of the pensions received from the government and their inability wholly to provide the necessary support, it is recommended that the institution be authorized to establish a system of *out* patients, to whom certain allowances may, from time to time, be made towards their care and maintenance.

A law for the government of the institution will not be needed until it is ready to go into operation.

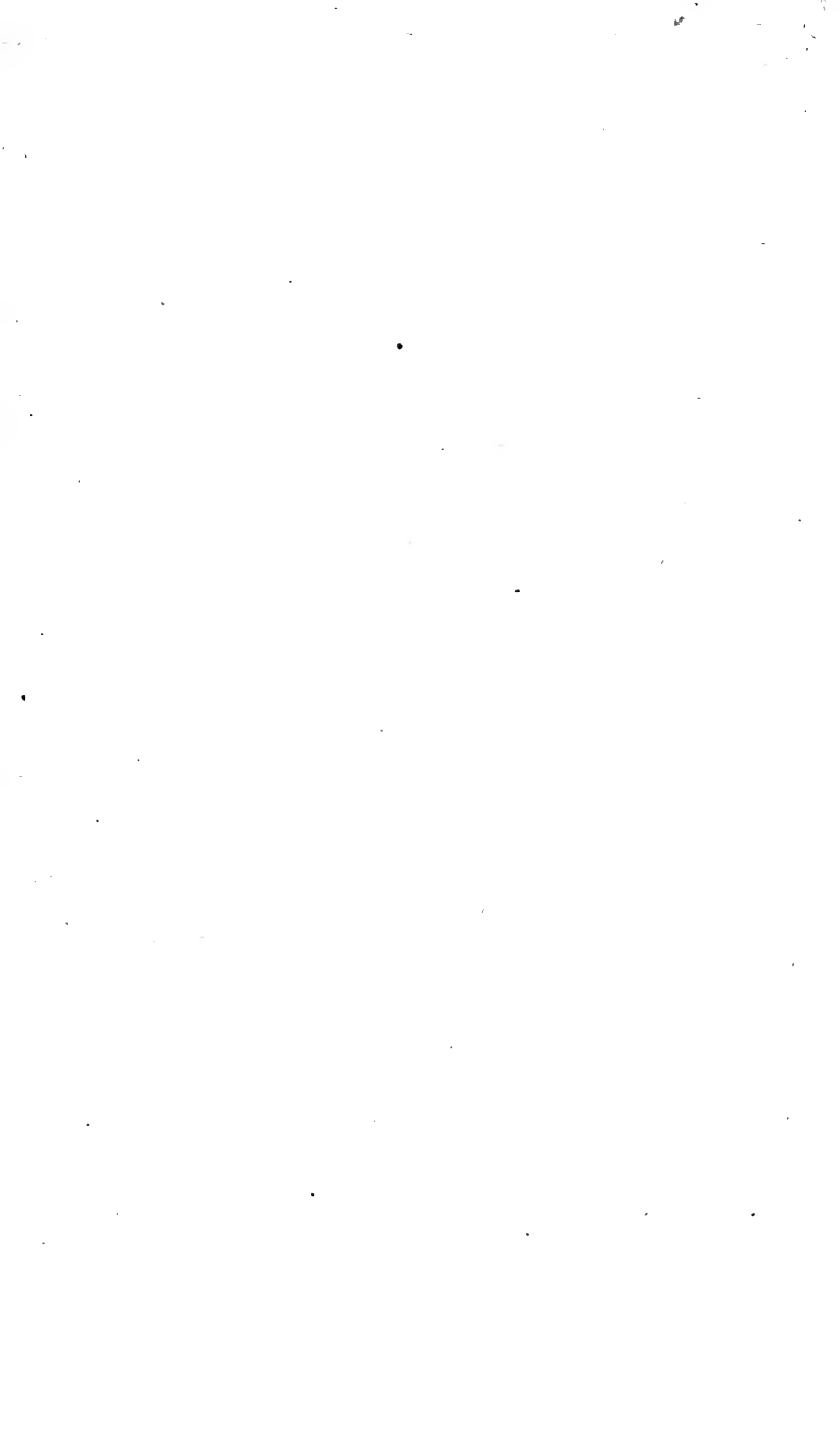
MARCUS L. WARD,
 DANIEL HAINES,
 WILLIAM A. NEWELL,
 CHARLES S. OLDEN,
 EDWIN A. STEVENS,
Commissioners.

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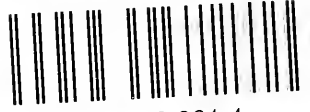
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